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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 3891
INFO RUEHCN/AMCONSUL CHENGDU 8854
RUEHGZ/AMCONSUL GUANGZHOU 3692
RUEHHK/AMCONSUL HONG KONG 9881
RUEHGH/AMCONSUL SHANGHAI 8732
RUEHSH/AMCONSUL SHENYANG 8503
RUEHBK/AMEMBASSY BANGKOK 5729
RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC
RHMFIUU/DEPT OF HOMELAND SECURITY WASHINGTON DC
RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC
RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC 0705
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SUBJECT: BEIJING AVIAN INFLUENZA UPDATE: NEW HUMAN AI CASE IN
JIANGSU PROVINCE

REF A) BEIJING 03628
B) GUANGZHOU 1048

¶1. (U) SUMMARY: China confirmed a human case of avian influenza on December 2, 2007. This is the fourth human case this year, three of which have died. The last case was reported in May 2007 (Ref A). In a divergence from past AI announcements, the Ministry of Health did not/not send around a formal notification to Embassies in Beijing; information confirming the case in Jiangsu Province appeared in many of the Chinese and international media instead. China continues to report human AI cases without corresponding poultry outbreaks. End Summary

¶2. This week the English language and Chinese media reported that Jiangsu Provincial Health authorities announced December 2 that a 24-year old male developed fever, chills and other symptoms on November 24 and was hospitalized on November 27 with a diagnosis of pneumonia. Once hospitalized, the patient's condition deteriorated and he died on Sunday December 2, four days after hospitalization. Tests done on December 1 by the Jiangsu Provincial Disease Control and Prevention Bureau (Jiangsu CDC) showed that the patient was H5N1 positive. Media reports indicated that confirmatory tests done by the Chinese Center for Disease Control (China CDC) the next day also were (nucleic acid) positive for H5N1. The Ministry of Health then officially confirmed through the media that the patient, surnamed Lu, was indeed infected with and had died of avian influenza.

¶3. (SBU) The way this case was announced differs from the previous human cases of avian influenza in China. Since reporting began in 2003 with the first AI cases in China, the Ministry of Health has always sent a formal notification facsimile to the U.S. Embassy reporting on each of the previous 16 cases. This case did not follow that pattern. It is not clear whether this represents a change in policy. [Note: a new minister, Chen Zhu has assumed office since the last reported case in June 2007 and officials in the MOH are very busy, with the Minister traveling internationally. This report also immediately following major media announcements associated with World AIDS Day (December 1) where revised HIV/AIDS statistics and a slight increase in the projected number of HIV-positive people (from 650,000 to 700,000) were announced.]

¶4. (U) This is China's fourth reported human case in 2007, and the

first of the traditional winter season when in previous years cases have been reported. Three of these four cases in 2007 died. [Note: Reports of the previous human cases in China have clustered in the November-April period, corresponding to the winter flu season.] As before, local animal administration officials reported that there was no HPAI outbreak in birds associated with this human case in Jiangsu Province and the patient had no known contact with poultry prior to his illness. China CDC continues to conduct a more in-depth epidemiological investigation into this case. In the Chinese practice of case control, the 69 individuals known to have contact with this 24-year old male are still under strict medical observation. So far, there are no further signs or symptoms of AI reported by provincial health authorities amongst this group of close contacts.

15. (U) China's last report of a poultry outbreak of avian influenza occurred in an outlying district of the southern metropolis of Guangzhou in Guangdong province, back in mid-September when the Ministry of Agriculture reported that over 36,000 ducks had been culled following the outbreak in Guangzhou's Panyu District (ref B). China continues its pattern of having isolated, sporadic cases of human avian influenza without corresponding outbreaks in poultry nearby.

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